

**HISTORY 30400: AMERICA IN THE 1960s**  
**FALL 2019**  
**T/TH 10:30-11:45 in UNIV 217**

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:00-4:00  
other days/times by appointment

This course surveys the political, social, and cultural history of 1960s America. The “Sixties” is something of a misnomer. The period was defined less by the borders of a single decade than by movements and issues that emerged in the 1940s and were only partially resolved by the time Richard Nixon resigned the presidency in 1974. There also is no consensus about the era’s meaning or significance—the 1960s continue to be the subject of passionate debate and political controversy in the United States. It was, many have said, a time of revolution, but whose revolution and who won? The times they were a-changin’, but why, how, and to what end? In exploring this turbulent decade, the course examines what did and what did not change in the 1960s. Topics include: the presidencies of John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Richard M. Nixon; the triumph and breakdown of postwar liberalism; the resurgence of conservatism; the many insurgent political and social movements of the decade, including the civil rights and black power movements, the new left, environmentalism, the chicano and red power movements, feminism, and the gay liberation movement; the counterculture; the sexual revolution; rock ‘n’ roll; and the Vietnam war. We will investigate these and other issues in a mix of printed, visual, audio, and multimedia sources such as speeches, correspondence, newspapers and magazines, autobiographies and oral histories, photographs, television, movies, and music. This course is open to all undergraduates.

Learning Outcomes

1. Examine the political, social, and cultural history of the United States in the long 1960s. Analyze what did and did not change during this turbulent era.
3. Evaluate the often competing and conflicting nature of historical interpretation and assess various forms of primary source evidence to form conclusions about the meaning and significance of the history of America in the 1960s.
4. Strengthen and deploy critical analytical, reading, and writing skills.

A Blackboard Learn website for History 30400 has all the course handouts, lecture outlines, some reading assignments, the writing assignments, and grades. <https://mycourses.purdue.edu>

The following paperback books are required reading for this class. Other required readings—internet sources and articles posted on Blackboard—are indicated on the course outline below and/or will be announced in class.

- Christopher B. Strain, *The Long Sixties: America, 1955-1973* (2017) [Full text online access, Purdue Libraries](#)
- Brian Ward, ed., *The 1960s: A Documentary Reader* (2010)

**COURSE OUTLINE AND READING ASSIGNMENTS**

**Introductions and the Culture and Politics of the 1950s**

August 20-22

Read: Strain, *The Long Sixties*, Preface and Chapter 1  
Ward, *The 1960s*, Introduction and Chapter 1

**John Kennedy, the New Frontier, and the Civil Rights Movement: 1960-1964**

August 27-September 5

Read: Strain, *The Long Sixties*, Chapters 2-4  
Ward, *The 1960s*, Chapters 3-4  
[Martin Luther King, Jr., Letter from a Birmingham Jail, 1963](#)  
[John F. Kennedy address on civil rights June 11, 1963](#)  
[John Lewis, speech at March on Washington, August 1963](#)

**Lyndon Johnson, the Great Society, and Social Movements: 1964-1966**

September 10-17

Read: Strain, *The Long Sixties*, Chapter 5  
Ward, *The 1960s*, Chapter 2 (all), Chapter 5 (pp. 90-98), and Chapter 8 (pp. 147-161)  
[Lyndon Johnson, Great Society speech, May 22, 1964](#)  
[Barry Goldwater, nomination acceptance speech, July 16, 1964](#)  
[Lyndon Johnson, nomination acceptance speech, August 27, 1964](#)

**Popular Culture and Counterculture**

September 19-October 1

Read: Strain, *The Long Sixties*, Chapter 7 (pp. 93-101) and Chapter 8 (pp. 109-121)  
Ward, *The 1960s*, Chapter 5 (pp. 99-103), Chapter 7 (pp. 125-34)  
Beth Bailey, "Sexual Revolution(s)," pdf on Blackboard  
[Joshua Davis, "Five Myths about Hippies," Washington Post, July 7, 2017](#)  
Counterculture documents, pdf on Blackboard  
"The Hippies: Philosophy of a Subculture," *Time* July 7, 1967, pdf on Blackboard

**MIDTERM EXAM IN CLASS ON THURSDAY OCTOBER 3**

**Fall Break: No class meeting Tuesday October 8**

**The War Abroad and the War at Home to 1968**

October 10-22

Read: Strain, *The Long Sixties*, Chapter 6  
Ward, *The 1960s*, Chapter 6  
["The Day Anti-Vietnam War Protesters Tried to Levitate the Pentagon," Washington Post, October 19, 2017](#)  
[Lyndon B. Johnson: Address at Johns Hopkins University: "Peace without Conquest."](#)  
[Paul Potter, "Naming the System," April 17, 1965](#)  
[Carl Oglesby, "Let Us Shape the Future," November 27, 1965](#)  
[Martin Luther King, Jr. "Beyond Vietnam," April 1967](#)

**Turning Points: 1967-1968**

October 24-29

Read: Strain, *The Long Sixties*, Chapter 10  
Ward, *The 1960s*, Chapter 5 (pp. 104-105), Chapter 8 (pp. 161-167), and Chapter 10 (all)  
1968 documents, pdf on Blackboard  
[Excerpts from the Kerner Report](#)  
["In a Time of Chaos, a Breakout Year for Black Athletes," Washington Post, May 28, 2018](#)  
["Did the News Media Led by Walter Cronkite Lose the War in Vietnam?" Washington Post, May 25, 2018](#)  
[The Living Room Candidate - Commercials - 1968](#)  
[Hubert Humphrey Democratic Party Nomination Acceptance speech 1968](#)  
[Roxane Gay, "Fifty Years Ago, Protesters Took on the Miss America Pageant and Electrified the Feminist Movement," Smithsonian Magazine, January 2018](#)

**Countercultures: From Summer of Love to Death at Altamont**

October 31-November 5

Read: Strain, *The Long Sixties*, Chapter 8 (pp. 122-130)  
Timothy Miller, "The Ethics of Community," pdf on Blackboard  
[Lisa Law, A Visual Journey, photographs, 1965-1971 \(browse\)](#)  
[Woodstock at 50, New York Times, August 5, 2019](#)

### **Richard Nixon and the War at Home and Abroad after 1968**

November 7-14

Read: Strain, *The Long Sixties*, Chapter 11  
Ward, *The 1960s*, Chapter 8 (pp. 168-172) and Chapter 11 (all)  
[Richard Nixon, address on the war in Vietnam, November 3, 1969](#)  
[Richard Nixon, address on the situation in Southeast Asia, April 30, 1970](#)  
[May 4 Collection, Kent State University](#) (browse)  
[John Kerry, Vietnam Veterans against the War, testimony, April 23, 1971](#)

### **Into the 1970s**

November 19-December 3

Read: Strain, *The Long Sixties*, Chapter 9  
Ward, *The 1960s*, Chapter 7, (pp. 135-146) and Chapter 9 (all)  
[Gaylord Nelson and Earth Day: The Making of the Modern Environmental Movement](#) (browse)  
[Classic Feminist Writings](#) (browse documents dated 1966-1972)  
[Documents from the 1969 Furor](#)  
[An Indian Manifesto: The Trail of Broken Treaties 1972](#)  
[Chicano/a Movement in Washington State](#) (browse digitized material from the late 1960s-early 1970s)

**Thanksgiving Week: No class meetings Tuesday November 26 and Thursday November 28**

### **Legacies: Making Sense of the Sixties**

December 3-5

Read: Strain, *The Long Sixties*, Chapter 12  
Ward, *The 1960s*, Chapter 12

**FINAL EXAM DURING FINALS WEEK—dates and times to be announced**

### **GRADING**

This course combines lectures and multimedia class presentations with frequent discussions. It is important to the success of the course that you not only attend class but that you keep up with the reading and other assignments and participate actively during class.

#### Exams:

There will be two exams: a midterm and a final. The midterm on Thursday October 3 will cover the course material from the first half of the course; the final—dates and times to be announced—will cover the material from the second half of the course. Each exam will consist of several short-answer questions and one essay question. To help you prepare for the exams, you will receive one-week in advance a list of short-answer questions and essay questions from which the exam will be drawn word-for-word. Each one-hour, in-class exam is worth 0-60 points.

#### Informal Essays:

Over the course of the semester, you will write three essays responding to questions based primarily on the reading material. Each essay is worth 0-20 points. You decide which three of eight dates you will submit essays on Blackboard. Instructions begin after the grading summary below.

#### In-class Responses:

There will be at least six opportunities during the semester to respond spontaneously and very informally to class material (lectures, films, discussion, etc.). These unscheduled, unannounced and generally ungraded in-class written response pieces will each be worth 4 points and will total 20 points. No make-ups for the in-class responses. But I will drop the lowest score; in other words, you are allowed one missed in-class response.

**TO SUMMARIZE THE GRADING:**

Informal essays (3 @ 0-20)	60 points= 30 %	193-200 pts = A+	153-158 pts = C+
In-class responses	20 points= 10 %	185-192 pts = A	145-152 pts = C
Midterm	60 points= 30 %	179-184 pts = A-	139-144 pts = C-
Final	60 points= 30 %	173-178 pts = B+	133-138 pts = D+
Total	200 points=100 %	165-172 pts = B	125-132 pts = D
		159-164 pts = B-	119-124 pts = D-
			0 -118pts = F

**READ-AND-RESPOND QUESTIONS and ESSAYS**

Over the course of the semester, you will write three short essays. Each essay should be about two double-spaced typed pages or 400-500 words. Each one is worth 0-20 points. You decide which three of eight dates you will submit essays. No extensions will be granted and no backtracking is allowed. The essays should be submitted on Blackboard by 11:59 pm on the assigned date.

The purpose of these essays is not so much to improve your writing skills as it is to stimulate thinking about issues, questions, and problems suggested by your study of America in the 1960s. The goal is for you to discover, develop, and clarify your own ideas and I will be looking for evidence that you are thinking seriously about history. **Your essays should show that you have done your reading** and that you are wrestling with ideas and concepts raised in the reading, in lectures and films shown in class, and in discussions. Do not do any research beyond the material assigned for and presented in class. For the most part, you will be rewarded for the process of thinking rather than the act of composing.

**INSTRUCTIONS: CHOOSE ANY THREE OF THE FOLLOWING EIGHT ESSAY OPTIONS. THEN SELECT ONE OF THE NUMBERED QUESTIONS UNDER THE ESSAY OPTIONS TO ANSWER. SUBMIT YOUR ESSAYS FROM ASSIGNMENTS ON BLACKBOARD.**

Essay Option 1. Answer *one* of the following three questions. Due by 11:59 pm Thursday September 5

1. How do the documents in *The 1960s* reflect the influence of “the Bomb” on American foreign policy and domestic culture in the 1960s?
2. Compare and contrast Martin Luther King’s Letter from a Birmingham Jail, King’s speech at the March on Washington, and John Lewis’ speech at the March on Washington. What do they share? In what ways are they dissimilar? How do you account for the differences and similarities?
3. How does *No Easy Walk* help you to understand the goals and purposes, the successes and failures, and the significance and impact of the civil rights movement in the early 1960s? Does the film confirm or challenge or modify the views and analysis found in the reading?

Essay Option 2. Answer *one* of the following two questions. Due by 11:59 pm Tuesday September 17

1. Define and describe liberalism as it was expressed in Johnson’s speeches. How was LBJ’s liberalism different from the conservatism evident in the speeches of Billy Graham, Barry Goldwater, and Ronald Reagan?
2. Compare and contrast the SNCC Founding statement, the Port Huron statement, and the Sharon statement. In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they dissimilar? What did SDS, YAF, and SNCC have in common? How were they different?

Essay Option 3. Answer *one* of the following three questions. Due by 11:59 pm Tuesday October 1

1. What was the counterculture’s critique of American society and culture? What did it propose as an alternative? Was the counterculture more radical and revolutionary than it was conventional and conservative? What documents in *The 1960s* and/or the pdfs on Blackboard help you to respond to these questions?
2. Critics have often dismissed the counterculture as narcissistic and escapist, as more interested in style politics than in the substance of serious political engagement. Do you agree or disagree? What does the reading material reveal about the relationship between political and cultural radicalism in the 1960s?
3. Revolutions imply a change in the center of power within a society. What then was “revolutionary” about the sexual revolution? Was it different for women than for men?

Essay Option 4. Answer one of the following three questions. Due by 11:59 pm Tuesday October 17

1. What were the main reasons for U. S. involvement in Vietnam? Who did LBJ define as the enemy in Vietnam? How did LBJ's advisors explain U. S. involvement in Vietnam? What were American objectives in fighting there?
2. What were the various bases for opposition to the U. S. war in Vietnam? What were the strategies of the antiwar movement? How did the movement expect to end the war?
3. How does *Two Days in October* help you to understand the American experience of Vietnam? Does it confirm or modify or challenge the views and analysis found in the reading?

Essay Option 5. Answer one of the following four questions. Due by 11:59 pm Tuesday October 29

1. How do the documents in Chapter 10 of *The 1960s* as well as the other reading help you to understand the various expressions of racial and ethnic pride in the second half of the 1960s? How do they illuminate the complex relationship between national and group identity?
2. Why did Richard Nixon win the presidential election in November 1968?
3. Why did Hubert Humphrey lose the presidential election in November 1968?
4. What do you think was the most significant event of 1968 and why?

Essay Option 6. Answer the following question. Due by 11:59 pm Tuesday November 5

1. Was Woodstock Nation a triumphant display of counterculture philosophy in action? How about Altamont?

Essay Option 7. Answer one of the following three questions. Due by 11:59 pm Thursday November 14

1. Write a letter to President Nixon expressing your opinion about his plans for Vietnamization. Use the point of view of one of the following people: an American soldier stationed in Vietnam; someone who believes the war should end immediately; someone who feels we should stay in Vietnam until the war is won.
2. What role did the news media play in shaping public opinion about the war in Vietnam?
3. In the debate over Vietnam after 1968, would you have been a hawk or a dove?

Essay Option 8. Answer one of the following three questions. Due by 11:59 pm Tuesday December 3

1. Should Gaylord Nelson, the Earth Day movement, and the modern environmental movement in general be considered a typical sixties movement? Why or why not?
2. What was the impact of the civil rights movement on other groups such as Native Americans, Chicano/as, gays and lesbians, and women? Were the movements' grievances, proposals for change, and proposed solutions more similar to or different than those of the black freedom movement? What sources address these questions?
3. What were some of the similarities among Native American, Chicano/a, gay, and feminist activists and their movements? In what respects were these movements different? What sources address these questions?

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**ACADEMIC INTEGRITY**

Purdue University and this professor prohibit "dishonesty in connection with any University activity. Cheating, plagiarism, or knowingly furnishing false information to the University are examples of dishonesty." (University Regulations, Part 5, Section III, B, 2, a). In this class it will lead to a failing grade (0) on the assignment. Depending on the severity of the incident it may lead to further consequences. And you should know that faculty members are required to report all cases of plagiarism to the Office of the Dean of Students. Please do your own work. For a set of helpful guidelines, see: <https://www.purdue.edu/odos/academic-integrity/>

**ACCESSIBILITY AND ACCOMMODATIONS**

Purdue University strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability, you are welcome to let me know so that we can discuss options. You may also contact the Disability Resource Center at: [drc@purdue.edu](mailto:drc@purdue.edu) or by phone: 765-494-1247.

**DIVERSITY & INCLUSION**

Purdue University is committed to maintaining a community that recognizes and values the inherent worth and dignity of every person; fosters tolerance, sensitivity, understanding, and mutual respect among its members; and

encourages each individual to strive to reach their own potential. In pursuit of its goal of academic excellence, the University seeks to develop and nurture diversity. The University believes that diversity among its many members strengthens the institution, stimulates creativity, promotes the exchange of ideas, and enriches campus life. Purdue's nondiscrimination policy is at [http://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea\\_eou\\_statement.html](http://www.purdue.edu/purdue/ea_eou_statement.html).

#### **MENTAL HEALTH**

- If you find yourself beginning to feel some stress, anxiety and/or feeling slightly overwhelmed, try WellTrack, <https://purdue.welltrack.com/>. Sign in and find information and tools at any time.
- If you need support and information about options and resources, please see the Office of the Dean of Students, <http://www.purdue.edu/odos>, for drop-in hours (M-F, 8 am- 5 pm).
- If you are struggling and need mental health services, Purdue University is committed to advancing the mental health and well-being of its students. If you or someone you know is feeling overwhelmed, depressed, and/or in need of mental health support, services are available. For help, such individuals should contact Counseling and Psychological Services (CAPS) at (765) 494-6995 and <http://www.purdue.edu/caps/> during and after hours, on weekends and holidays, or by going to the CAPS office of the second floor of the Purdue University Student Health Center (PUSH) during business hours.

#### **UNIVERSITY EMERGENCY POLICY**

In the event of a major campus emergency, course requirements, deadlines, and grading percentages are subject to changes that may be necessitated by a revised semester calendar or other circumstances. Any changes will be posted, once the course resumes, on the course website. Here are ways to get information about changes in this course: my email address [ngabin@purdue.edu](mailto:ngabin@purdue.edu), my office phone 765-494-4141, and the History Department main office phone: 494-4132. You are expected to read your @purdue.edu email on a frequent basis.

#### **EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

Please review the Emergency Preparedness website:

[http://www.purdue.edu/ehps/emergency\\_preparedness/index.html](http://www.purdue.edu/ehps/emergency_preparedness/index.html)